

## MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS—SOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

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Indian music is singularly lacking in Historical material. It is a surprising fact that though the origin and development of our music can be traced from pre-historic times, yet no one seems to have taken the trouble of making a chronological study of the subject and whatever has been written during the last fifty years or so, deals only with certain aspects of the subject, like the History of the Vina, the Evolution of ragas, talas and so on. The works of great lakshnakaras, written from time to time during the long and colourful development of the art, deal only with the art as it was practised during the time of the writer. Even exact dates of the writers are not known and the dates which are accepted now are arrived at by surmise and deduction. Yet from the few sources we have such as Sangita literature, commentaries on these, Nonsangita literature, Archaeology, Manuscripts, writings of foreign travellers and the compositions of vaggeyakaras, we are now able to trace with a certain amount of accuracy, the stages through which the art passed in order to attain its present form.

Musical compositions have in them a fund of priceless material regarding music and musicians. A great deal of useful information may also be gathered from Kathakali, Geyanatakās, Nritya natakās and Yakshagānās also. The details obtained from these may be placed under different heads, such as, Biographical details, details about musical instruments, scientific facts relating to music in general and rāgās and tālās in particular. A study of the compositions of great composers will be a great use of the student as well as the savant of music.

There are no records giving biographical details regarding great composers. In former times they did not consider it very essential to

record the dates of the important incidents in their lives. It never occurred to the great vāggēyakārās to speak of themselves and their experiences or record them anywhere. The upper most and only idea in their minds was to sing the praises of God without any thought about themselves. In their lives there was no place for self. In the attempt by modern writers to piece together an authentic account of their lives, it is their compositions that throw a flood of welcome light, clear many of our doubts and confirm our assumptions.

In the history of music, Mānikkavāsagar the Tēvārakāras and the Ālvārs are the earliest singers and composers. Biographical details about these composers are not plentiful, but still a few important facts may be gleaned from their hymns. The fact that Thirugnānasambandar had darsan of Lord Siva and Pārvati is seen from his first hymn beginning with the words “Tōdudaya Śeviyān”. He was also the first composer to introduce his name as mudra in the Tirukadaikāppu of his hymns. This Tirukadaikāppu is the last verse of his hymns in which the benefits of singing the hymn and the mudra are given. The practise of introducing mudras in their songs by composers may said be begin with Tirugnānasambandar.

The young bhakta went from the place to place, visiting temples, pouring forth his hymns in praise of the deities enshrined in them, keeping time with his hands. Sundarar says :

“ Nālum innisaiyāl Tamil parappum  
Gnānasambandanukkum Ulahavarmun  
Tālam yīndu avan pādalukku  
Irangum tanmaiyālanai ” (7-62-8)

that Lord Siva moved by the sight of the child keeping time with his tender hands, presented a pair of golden cymbals, so that his little hands may not be hurt while counting the tala.

That Sundarar came after Sambandar and Appar is seen from the following lines from a hymn of his where he says :

“ Nallisai Gnānasambandanum Nāvinuk  
Karayanum Pādiya nattamiḷ mālai  
Colliye colli yéttukappānai ”

that he studied the padikams of the two saints and sang them in the presence of God. From this we can say that he came after Sambandar and Appar. He also held them in great respect.

The next composer of note is Jayadēva who lived in the 12th Century. We can say that his ashtapadis are the first compositions with ragas and talas, and with a better melodic form. The Tēvārams were merely verses sung to the same tune, but in the ashtapadi a line from the first verse was sung as a refrain. This made the composition more attractive. Biographical details of Jayadēva are not plentiful, but in his ashtapadis we have a few references to the place of his birth, his parents and his wife. In the eighth charana of the seventh ashtapadi "Māmiyam calita" he says "Kindubilva samudra sambhava" that Kindubilvam is the place of his birth. In the slokas at the end of the opera, he says that he is the son of Bhōjadēva and Ramādēvi. "Sri Bhojadeva prabhavasya".

That his wife was Padmāvati is seen from the many reference he makes to her in his ashtapadis. In the words 'Padmāvati Carana Cārana Cakravarti' in the second dhyāna slōka at the commencement of the work, he speaks of himself as the master (Cakravarti) skilled in guiding the dancing feet of Padmāvati, thereby showing that while he sang the ashtapadis in the presence of Krishna, Padmāvati performed appropriate abhinaya for them. To be able to guide her steps, Jayadēva must have been a master of dance. Again in the twenty first song he speaks of himself as being united with Padmāvati.

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"Vihita Padmāvati Sukhasamaje  
Bhanati Jayadēvakavi rāja Rāje"

The nineteenth ashtapadi is known as 'Darsana ashtapadi' and 'Sanjivini ashtapadi'. It is from this that we understand that Lord Krishna appeared to Padmāvati and added the two lines to complete the ashtapadi Jayadēva was composing. Jayadēva's great wonder at the great good fortune of his wife and also the realisation of her greatness is seen in the words :

"Jayati Padmāvati ramana Jayadēva Kavi"

Jayadēva is the father of all latter compositions. In the poetry,

music and rhythm of the lines, it occupies an unrivalled place not only in the sphere of devotional music, but also of dance and literature.

Purandaradāsa is a revered name in the history of Carnātic Music. He occupies an eminent place among the galaxy of great musicians and composers of our country and he stands next only to Tyāgarāja, as one known throughout India as the preceptor and guru of all students of music. Till his thirtieth year he was caught in the whirlpool of worldly pursuits, with the sole aim of amassing money. It is the nosering incident as it is called, which opened his eyes to the divine purpose for which he was born. His deep grief and regret for wasting thirty precious years of his life is expressed in the kirtana "Mōsahōdenello" in Atāna raga where he says :

"youvana dalli Sri Haripāda nambadē  
Muvvathuvarusha mōhabdi yalli biddu "

meaning "I have wasted thirty years of my life, in following after worldly things, without having faith in the holy feet of Hari". From this we can also conclude, that his career as a composer and musician began only after his thirtieth year.

Purandaradasa was a prolific composer. The number of his compositions run to a few lakhs. According to details given in the kirtana "Vasudeva namavaliya" in Mukhari raga and jampa tala the total number of his compositions come to four lakhs and seventy nine thousand. These consist of kirtanas, suladis namavalis and narrative songs. They are given below :

1. Kritis on khetras from Kedar to Rameswaram	— 1,25,000
2. Sūladis on vēdās purāṇās and sāstrās	— 64,000
3. Nāmāvalis on Svēta dvīpu vaikunta etc.,	— 35,000
4. Description of Brahmalōka, Kailāsa etc.,	— 80,000
5. Narrative songs.	— 90,000
6. Songs in praise of saints from Mādhavarāya to Vyāsarāya	— 60,000
7. Description of ishtadēvatās	— 25,000
	<hr/> 4,79,000 <hr/>

It is of interest to note here Purandaradāsa uses the word *kṛiti* in connection with musical compositions but it is not in the sense with which we use the term now. He uses it here in a general sense to mean musical composition-something that is created. "Yath *kṛitam*, tath *kṛiti*". At present the name *kṛiti* is given to the highly polished and elaborate composition, brimming over with *sangatis* and other beauties, such as those composed by the musical trinity. Purandara dāsa, greatly influenced the later composers and he was considered to be the Karnāṭaka *Sangita Pithāmahā*. In the opening *Kanda padyam* in *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam*, *Tyāgarāja* refers to Purandaradāsa as one among the great *bhaktas*.

*Kṣhētreḡna*, the father of the *pada* composition is one of the composers, regarding whom we have very meagre biographical details. We only know that he travelled all over the South, visiting temples and composing exquisite *padas*. From a few of the *padas* like "Taruniro *ninendaka*" in *Ghanṭarava* and "Indiro *Varaduniki*" in *Dhanyasi*, we know that his name was *Varadayya*, but due to his extensive travels, during which he visited many temples, he came to be called *Kṣhēṭrayya* or *Kṣhētreḡna*.

Though only a few of his *padams* are well known now, he is believed to have composed thousands of *padas* in the courts of the kings he visited. Evidence of this we find in his *Mukhari raga padam* "*Vēḍukato neluchukonna*", in which he says that he sang two thousand *padas* in the court of *Tirumala Naik* of *Madurai* (Ad 1623—1659), a thousand in the court of *Vijayarāghava* of *Tānjōre* (1633—1673) and a thousand and five hundred in the court of the *Pādusha* of *Gōlkonda*, *Abdulla Kutub Shah* (1622—1672 A.D.) The last mentioned 1,500 were composed in forty days. This information given in this *padam* shows what a genius he was. In the same *padam* a reference is made to a competition between him and *Tulasimūrti* of the *Gōlkonda darbar*, when he composed one thousand five hundred *padas* in forty days and won the contest. His mention of the three kings *Tirumala Naik* of *Madurai*, *Vijayarāghava* of *Tānjōre* and the *Pādusha* of *Gōlkonda*, all of whom lived between 1622 and 1675 helps us to prove that *Kṣhētreḡna* belonged to the first half of the seventeenth century.

Coming to the golden age of *Karnatic* music, that is, more recent times, we are able to collect much material regarding the parentage,



life and contribution of great composers from their compositions. Details regarding Tyāgarāja are plentiful in his kriti and operas. He was a Telugu Brahmin of the Muriginadu sect and belonged to the Kākarala vamsa. Tyagaraja refers to himself as the moon of Kākarla samudra in the fifth kanda pada in his opera Nowka Charitra.

“Kākarlām budhi candrudu, Srīkarudaku Tyāgarāja Citta nivēsa Nowka caritra monarcēda. Sri kāntā cittagimpu Sri Raghu-rāma”

It is of interest that Venketaramana Bhāgavatar, his foremost disciple also mentions this in the first verse of his mangalāshtakam.

“Srimat kākarla vamsābdi candrāyamala tējasē  
Pūrnāya punyasīlāya Tyāgarājāya mangalam”.

Tyāgarājas ancestors lived in this village and later on during the reign of the Vijayanagar kings, migrated to the South to propagate Hindu culture.

Tyāgarājas parents were Rāma Brahman and Sītamma. He refers to them in the kriti “Sītamma māyammā SrīRāmudu mātandri” in Vasanta ragam. It is also an expression of devotion to his earthly, as well as his spiritual parents. He also refers to himself as the son of Rama Brahman in the kriti “Dorukuna” in Bilahari raga. He says :

“Rāma Brahma tanayudou, Tyāga-  
Rājutā baducu nūcaka”

Again he speaks of his father in the phalasruti to the opera Prah-lāda bhakti vijayam.

“Sri Rāma Brahma tanaya Tyāgarājēna nirmitam  
Prah-lāda Bhakti vijaya”.

Wāla-japet Venkataramana Bhāgavatar also refers to the father of his guru in the second charana of his kriti.

“Guru Caranam bhajare” in Sankarabharana raga where he says :

“Ramabrahma sudimani tanayam”. In the Kriti “Vadarasane” in Poorvakalyāni, adi tāla, in which he enumerates the greatness or

“prabhāvam” of his guru, he says that Tyāgarāja an amsa of Nārada, who is the amsa of Vāsudēva, was born due to the great deeds done by Rāma Brahman in his previous births. “Rāma Brahma pūrva janma kṛta bhūri punyēna”. That Tyāgarāja lived in Tiruvaiyāru is mentioned in the song “Guru vāru mahima” in Ānandabhairavi raga.

“Tiruvaiyāranupuramuna velasina  
Hari bhaktāgrēsarulagu Tyāgarāja”

In the second kanda padyam in Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam, Tyāgarāja says that he is the son of Rāma Brahman who lived in Panchanadam. This is another name of Tiruvaiyāru.

It is a well known fact that though Tyāgarāja was born in Tiruvārūr, his father shifted to Tiruvaiyāru with his family, in order to give his son the benefit of education in the Sanskrit college established there by Gōvinda Dikshitar.

Tyāgarāja had a great devotion to Sri Nārada whom he considered to be his guru and guide. He has composed many kritis in praise of Nārada. It is said that in the early days of his career as a composer he was visited by a sage, who gifted him with some rare grantas and left saying that he would return later to partake of his hospitality. Tyāgarāja waited for him the whole day and finally went to bed without food. The same night, the sage who was no other than Nārada, appeared and revealed himself and blessed him. Overjoyed, Tyāgarāja expresses his indebtedness to Nārada in a few kritis such as “Varanārada” in Vijayasri, “Nārada Guruswāmi” in Darbār and “Sri Nārada muni Gururāya” in Bhairavi. In all these he speaks of the sage as his guru. In the Bhairavi song he confirms the fact that he had darsan of Nārada “Sri Nāradamuni guru rāyākanti, Mēnādi tapamō guru Rāyā” and in the charana “Mīsēva darakunuguru rāyā” meaning ‘Oh! sage Nārada, Oh Guru, I have seen thee. Is it a reward for my devotion that I am blessed by you, Oh guru rāyā. Some more songs he composed in honour of Nārada such as “Nārada gāna lōla” in Atana, “Sri Nārada nāda” in Kānada and “Nārada muni vedalina” in Pantuvarāli.

One of the grantas presented by Nārada was entitled “Svarānavam”. Unfortunately this work is lost. In the last charana of the

kriti "Svararāgasudhārāsa" he specifically mentions this work and says

"Rajata girīsudu nagajaga delpu,  
Svārānava maṃmamulu  
Vijayamugala Tyāgarājuderuké,  
Visvasinci telusukō manasā",

that he obtained victory through the study of the mysteries of the Svarānavam, which was taught by Siva to Pārvathy. This establishes the fact that he did have access to this work.

Tyagaraja had great regard and admiration for the early stalwarts like Purandaradāsa, Rāmadās and Tulasidās. In the kanda-padyam which opens Prahlāda Bhaktivijayam, he offers obeisance to Sri Rāma, Vishvaksēnu, Vāni and Nārada. This is followed by praise of Tulasidās, Purandaradās and Ramadās, who were great Bhaktas of Sri Rāma. In the prose passage which follows, he names the Bhagavatas like, Pānduranga, Nāmadēvā, Gnānadēvā, Sahadēvā, Jayadevā, Tukkarām and Nārāyana Tīrta, establishing the fact that he had studied the works of early composers, singers and bhaktas.

Tyāgarāja refers to Bhadrāchala Rāmadās in four of his kritis. In "Kshirasagara Sayana" in Devagandhari raga he refers to him as 'Dhīrudou' or brave one "Dhirudou Rāmadāsuni bandhamu Dīrcinadi Vinnānura"

In 'Kaligi yuntē' in Kiravāni, he counts him as one of the Bhāgavatāgrēsas like Nārada and Prahlāda. In the Sāranga kriti "Ēmideva" he is one who was helped by Sītā Dēvi. In "Brindāvana lōlā" in Tōdi he calls himself the dāsā of Rāmadāsā. "Rāmadāsa dāsa Tyāgarājanuta Caritra". In all these songs we see the expression of Tyāgarājas admiration for Rāmadās and his courage and bhakti.

That Tyāgarāja composed the Nowka caritram is mentioned in the fifth kandapadya in the opera. (See before). The Phala sruti of Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam discloses the fact that he composed this opera also (See before). Tyāgarāja also composed groups of hundred kritis each and called them "Śatarāga ratna mālika". One such group begins with "Rāgaratnamālikachē" in Ritgaula and ends with the Rasāli kriti, "Aparādamulanōrva" where he says 'Okani-



brovuteliya kirtanasatkam" in the charanam. In Elāvatāra in Mukhāri, he admits that he composed the "Śatarāgaratnamālika". In the charanam he says "Śatarāgaratnamālikalu racincina". The many gems in the shape of kritis which he left behind him in honour of the deities of the temples he visited during his pilgrimage help us to trace the course of his journey. Examples of such kritis to mention only a few are: Teratiyakarāda in Gaulipantu at Tiruppati, Oh Rangaśāyi-Kāmbhōji at Srirangam, Dārini Telusukonti - Suddhasāvēri at Tiruvottiyur. Sundarēsvaruni-Sankarābharana at Kōvur.

Details regarding the patrons of some composers also may be obtained from their compositions. Arunagirinādar in the Tiruppugal "Atalacēdanārādā" in Sankarābharana says "Udayatāma mārpana prapuda dēva mārāja nulamumādavaḷ dēvar Perumāle" Showing that he was patronised by Proudā Pratāpadēva of Vijayanagar. Most of our composers shunned popularity and the praise of kings and lords. Their only desire was to be left alone to pay homage to their ishta Dēvatās by singing their praise. But among modern musicians we have a few who have mentioned their patrons in their songs. To us these are useful details helping us to know something of their lives and times. Pallavi Gōpālayya was an eminent composer and Pallavi singer of the 18th Century and was a samastāna vidvān in the Tānjōre Court under Sarabhōji. This fact he reveals in his well known Tōdi Varna in ata tala where he says "Tanatudaina Sri Tula-jēndruni tanayudaina Sarabhōji Mahārājēndra". That Mysore Sadāsiva Rao was patronised by the Mysore Mahārāja can be deduced from his padavarna in Dhanyāsi rāga, where in the anupallavi he says "Cāma Rāja bhūpāla tanaya, sarasa Sri Krishnarājēndrā". This Padvarna has Krishnarāja Wadayār as the nāyaka.

Rāmaswāmi Dikshitar, the father of Muthuswāmi Dikshitar, created many rāgamālikas. His magnum Opus is the Rāgamālika in one hundred and eight rāgas and tālas, beginning with the words "Nātakā-dividyāla" a master piece exposing his magnificent originality, scholarship and musicianship. It was composed in honour of Venkatakrishna Mudaliār, otherwise known as Cinnia Mudaliār of Manali, a liberal patron of learning and fine arts. Dikshitar, who was closely connected with this family, refers to Venkatakrishna Mudaliār, at the

end of the composition, in the section in *Dēvagāndhāri* rāga “*Gāra-vimcu siddhamu dēvagāndhārini pomdu srikara Venketakrishna vajīra*”. In the *Rāgamālika* commencing with the words “*Sāmaja-gamana*” he praises the *Tānjōre Mahārāja Amarasimha* (1787-1798) with the words “*Pratāpasimhēndranitanaya Cīranjīvi Amarasimha Bhūpāla*”.

Muthuswāmi Dikshitar refers to his patron Vaidyalinga Bhūpāla of Kuḷikarai, in his *Caturdasa rāgamālika* in the section in *Bhūpāla* rāga. Subbarāma Dikshitar the grandson of Bāluswāmi Dikshitar, the brother of Muthuswāmi Dikshitar, speaks of three kings who lived during his time, in the *anubandam* of his magnificent work *Sangita Sampradāya Pradarsini*. He mentions the name and titles of the *Mahārāja* of *Trāvancōre*, *Srī Moolam Tirunāl*, in the *navāratnamālika* “*Nī sarilēni kōrini*” where, in the last section in *Manirangu* he says, “*Srī Rāma Varma Kulasēkhara Krītapatini brōchu, Sri Abjanābha nā sāmi*”. It is a prayer to *Padmanābha sāmi* to protect the *Mahārāja*. *Sri Bhāskaraswāmi Setupati*, *Raja* of *Ramnad* is honoured in the *Navaratnamālika* beginning with the words “*Gāra-vamu gamana dorayani*” where in the section in *Mukhāri* raga he says “*Vīra dasa mukhāri sētavibhu Bhāskara Mahipālā*”. The *rāgamālika* “*Kāmincinakalāvati*” was composed in honour of the *Mahārāja* of *Vizianagaram*. In the last section in *Vasantā* rāga he prays to *Sri Pārthasārathi* to save the king. “*Sri Gajapathi kshitipati rakshimcu Sri Pārthasārathy*”. The *Navaratna rāgamālika* beginning with the words ‘*Yemdukurārā*’ is in honour of the zamindar of *Etyāpuram*. *Annāswāmi Sāstri*, the adopted son of *Subbaraya sastri* was for a long time connected with the *Udayārpālayam Samastānam*. In his *Jāvali* in *Kēdaragaula* “*Kāminciyunadira*” he praises *Kacci Kalyāna Rangappa Udayār* of *Udayārpālayam*. *Ghanam Krishna Iyer* also lived for some time in *Udayārpālayam*. He was a *Tamil pada* composer of great merit, and in the *charana* of the *Kalyāni rāga padam* “*Pārengum pārtalum*” he prays for the welfare of his patron. “*Purna Candiran polē inbamudanē kacci Kalyānaranganai-kkakkum Āndavanē*”.

A few of the *Vaggēyakārās* refer to their gurus with great reverence and devotion. At a time when the guru occupied a position next to God, it is not surprising that many composers referred to their

preceptors with great love and reverence. We have already seen Tyāgarājas devotion in Nārada, whom he took to be his Guru. Ponniah Pillai and his four brothers, the Tānjōre qaurtette, were under the tutelage of Muthuswāmi Dikshitar for some years. It is said that at the end of their training, they presented their guru with ten kritis, composed in his inimitable style and with his mudra guruguha, because of their boundless admiration for him. In the kriti "Māyātīta svarūpini" in Māyāmālavagaula, Ponniah says "Sri Guruguha Swāmiki ne dāsudaithi" that he is the sishya of Dikshitar whom he refers to as Gurugahaswāmi. This same gurubhaki is seen in some of Wāljapet Venkataramana Bhāgavatara songs, when he speaks of his master.

Paidāla Gurumūrti Sāstri, the prolific composer of both sāmanya and lakshaṇa gita offers obeisance to his master in the gita in Nāta, where he says "Gāna Vidyā durandara Venketa Subbarāya Gārō" praising him as one who was a master of gāna vidya.

Tyāgarājas songs have attained unquestioned supremacy in the field of Music. The phenomenal development of Karnātic Music, during the last two hundred years, may be attributed to the study and practise of Tyāgarājas songs. The warm and sparkling music, the fine expression of all the varied human emotions, the harmonious blending of rāga, tāla, bhāva and sātitya are all unique in his compositions. The music brings out the meaning and rasa, sought to be expressed in the words and tāla brings perfect consonance of all these elements.

It will be of interest to know what Tyāgarājas ideas were regarding the lakshana and lakshya of music. In many of his kritis he expresses his high regard for Nāda from which music springs. No other composer has given such high praise to Music as Tyagarāja has done. To other composers music was only an aid to express their devotion to God but to Tyāgarāja music was the very form of God to be worshipped and adored. The kriti 'Nādōpāsana' in Bēgada, says that Siva, Vishnu and Brahma worhipped nada as the complete phenomenon of sound and also as the basis of music and that they were masters of yantra (Instrumental music) tantra (rhythm) and mantra (song). That the Trimurtis paid homage to music is the

highest tribute that could be paid to Nāda. The same idea is seen in the Kalyānavasanta kriti. "Nādatōludai" where he says that Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, Subramanya and Ganapati performed upāsana to the same nāda.

In the kriti "Nada sudarasam bilanu" he says that nada is the basis for vēdās, purānās and āgama sāstras. "Vēdapurānāgama sāstrātulakadaramou". Further he says that the seven svaras are the tiny beads tied to the bow, the raga is the bow kōdandam, the three styles of music ghana, naya and dēśya the string, tālas are the arrows, and the sangatis bringing out the music are the words suitable for the occasion.

" Svaramulu yāroka ghantalu, varāragamu kōdandamu,  
Duranaya dēśyamu trigunamu niratagati saramura.  
Sarasa sangati sandharbhamu gala gira muluta  
Dharabhajanē bhāgyamura, Tyāgarāju sēvincu "

Such nāda is worthy of worship. This is an exquisite description of the various elements of music.

Tyāgarāja's explanation of the causation of sound is scientific and in agreement with that given out by great lakshanakaras. In the kriti 'Mōkshamugalada' in Sāramati raga, he says that there is no mōksha for an unmusical being and goes on to explain how sound is caused.

" Prānanala samyōgamuvalla  
Pranava nādamu sapta svaramulau barakaka ".

when the life breath acts upon the fire abiding in the body Omkāra-nāda is produced from which the seven svaras emerge. This very description is given by writers like Matanga and Sārṅgadēva and hence it is evident that Tyāgarāja has studied their works.

The idea that practise of music is the highest homage which could be offered to the creator is seen in many of his kritis such as 'Sangīta sāstra gnānamu' in Mukhari, "Sangīta Gnānamu" in Dhanyāsi, "Svara-rāga Sudhārāsa" in Sankarābharana, Nāda tanumanisam" in Citta-ranjani "Sōbillusaptasvara" in Jaganmōhini, "Mōkshamugalada" in Sāramati, Endukkupeddala in Sankarābharana and a host of others.

In the charna of Svararāgasudhārāsa, he says "Mulādhāraja nāda merugude, mudamagu mōkshamura" that the understanding of the knowledge of the secrets of sound emanating from the mūlādhāra is the highest blessing, giving the joys of mōksha. The seven svaras which come from from this nāda are conducive to heavenly bliss. "Sobillu Saptasvara" in Jaganmohini clearly enunciates the idea that the seven svaras are produced in the five regions, naval, heart, throat, mouth and nose. "Nābhi hrit khanta rasa nāsādula yento, sōbillu sapta svara sundarula bhajimpava manasa". This means that the seven svaras exist in each of these regions, and not that these exist in the seven regions. Putting it in a simpler form we can say that music makes use of the five stayis, Anumandra, Mandra, Madhya, Tāra and Atitāra, each rising higher in pitch than its predecessor.

This idea is seen in "Nādatanumanisam" where he says "Sadyō-jātādi pancavaktra sariga mapadani vara saptasvara", that the seven svaras are produced from the seven faces of Siva, Sadyōjātam, Aghōram, Isānam, Tatpurusham and Vāmadēvam. Here also we should understand that the seven svaras arise from each of the five faces. This is the logical meaning which can be given to this passage. Tyāgarāja calls the svaras "Kōlāhala saptasvara", that they are joyful, moving about and not stationary. In Nādalōludai he says that nada is capable of bestowing Brahmānanda, the highest joy. In Rāgasudhārāsa in Āndōlika we are told that in enjoying the sweetness of rāga, one is able to attain the fruits of yāga, yōga, bhōga and tyāga. The reference here is to pure, absolute rāga as in singing ālāpana. Examples like this may be quoted without number.

In the kriti "Bhajana sēyavē manasa" in Kalyāni he asks "Oh! mind when you have attained the capacity understand nāda, pranava, sapta svaras, vēdas and varnas which form part of the catushashti kalas, why do you distract your mind with arguments and discussion, which will lead you away from mukti mārگا". It is important to him that the mind should not deviate from the chosen path.

Tyagaraja emphasises the fact that, not only the art, but the science of music - Sastra - is important, in the Darbar kriti. "Sangita Sastra gnanamu". He says that knowledge of sastra is conducive to attaining sārūpya. In "Vararāga layagnulu", he condemns those who appear to be masters of rāga and laya, without really under-



standing them. Tyagaraja also greatly respected tradition or sampradaya and adhered strictly to rules established by ancients. In "Sādin-cene" the Ārabhi Pancaratnam, he says that Lord Krishna is "Sangita Sampradāyākudu" one who adhered to sampradāya. In the Tōdi kriti "Kaddanavāriki" he opines that one should offer worship to God with pure mind and susvaras without going against paddadhi.

"Suddha maina manasuce susvaramuto  
Paddu tappaga bhajince".

In "Mitri bhāgyame" in Kharaharapriya, Tyāgarāja says that ālāpana should be done beautifully in Vinta ragas or apūrva ragas. Vinta ragas are apūrva rāgās. "Vinta rāga mulanālāpamu sēyaka". He has composed kritis in many vinta rāgas.

He refers to ghana, naya and dēśya in the kritis 'Koluvamare-gada' in Todi and in "Nāda sudārasambilanu" in Arabhi. In the first one he says that alapana should be sung in ghana naya and dēśya-ragas. This refers to the three types of ragas, majestic, soft and those having the characteristics of both.

Tyagaraja enumerates with apt similies the stirring qualities of an ideal guru in the kriti "Nīcittamu nirmalamu". A guru, he says is like a cleaning seed, purifying the pupils mind of all impurity. He elevates the common man into his own image, just as the wasp converts the ordinary worm into its own kind. He is like the sun, dismissing darkness and giving prosperity. "Finding all these qualities in thee Oh Rāmā," he says, "I have taken you as my Guru".

In the kriti "Vidulaku" in Mayamalava gaula, and "Sangīta-gñānamu" in Dhanyasi, Tyagaraja gives the names of eminent musicologists like Bharata, Matanga, Nārada, Sarngadēva, Kāsyappa and Candi showing that he had studied the treatises of these writers. A list of great experts in the practise of the art, like Lakshmi, Pārvati, Sarasvati, Ānjanēya, Guha, Gajēndra, Indra, Nandi, for whom he had great respect is also given in these songs.

The study of Muthuswami Dikshitar's kritis is not so very fruitful regarding the lakshana and lakshia of music as is Tyagarāja's compositions. Dikshitar's only object in life was to describe the temples he visited and to enumerate the kalyāna gunas of the deities installed there. But we do find some useful details in some of his kritis. In

most of these the rāga mudra is introduced, thus preventing posterity from changing the rāgas of the songs. The correct names of the rāgas may also be obtained in some cases. For instance sāmārāga is often referred to as Shāma or Shyama. But in the section in this raga, in the Chaturdasa rāga malika he says "Sadāsrāyam sāmāgana vinutam", using the correct name sāmā. The correspondence of the syllable 'sa' in sadāsrāyam and sāmāgana, also proves this conclusively. To quote another example, Nilāmbari is sometimes referred to as Nilāmburi. Dikshitar mentions this as Nilambari in the Song "Ambanilaya dakshi" in the words "Ambujāramana sōdari ādari ambari kādambari Nilāmbari". The anuprasa also establishes that the name of the raga is Nilāmbari.

Dikshitar accepted the theory of the twenty two srutis and this is seen in the kriti "Vamsavati yuvati" in Vamsavati raga, where he says "Dvāvimsat sruti svara svarūpini". That he advocated the use of the dasavidha gamakas for the vina is expressed in "Meenakshi me modam dehi" in Poorvakalyani, where he says that the goddess is 'vinā gāna dasa gamagapriye'. Dikshitar is also a master in the use of prāsa, yati, svarākshara and vādisamvādi relationship of svaras. Hence his songs are admired not only as brilliant musical compositions but also as exquisite pieces of literature.

From earliest times instruments have played a significant role in the social and religious lives of the people and in the evolution of music. In primitive times man devised varieties of musical instruments to be used during important occasions in his village. During Vedic times we see that while the priests recited the Vēdas, their wives sitting behind them played on the vīna. The vīna, Vēnu, and mrdangam were used during vèdic sacrifices. Our great composers were vocalists and instrumentalists. Musical instruments have also helped us to have a better understanding of the qualities of musical tones, the laws governing their production, the subtle srutis and gamakas.

The Trinity of our music have made references to musical instruments in their composition. A vocalist was expected to have some knowledge of instruments also and a vice-versa. Our composers have spoken in high terms of the Vīna vènu and mrdanga and have also

referred to the bhèri, maddala, nāgasvara and dundubi. The Vīna is held in great esteem and Tyāgarāja says "Vīna Vādana lōludou Siva manō, Vida merugeru Tyāgarāja Vinuta" that there is no mōksha for a person who does not know the mind of Siva who performs nādōpāsana by playing on the Vīna. Dikshitar refers to the Vīna in the Ābhèri kriti "Vīnābhèri vēnu Vādyā vinōdini" and says that sarasvati is one who delights in the music of the Vīna, bhèri and vēnu.

Tyāgarāja speaks of the Venu in "Sāmajavarada" in Hindōlam and "Vēnugāna lōluni" in Kādāraganla. In the Sūlini song he says that Sri Krishna protected 16,000 Gopis with his Vēnugānam. Dikshitar calls Krishna 'Murali dhara' in the Bhairavi kriti. "Bala-gapala".

Tyagaraja recommends the use of the Tampura as an accompaniment to vocal music in the two kritis 'Kaddanavāriki' and 'Kolu-vamarēgada' in Tōdi. In the first he says "Niddura nirāgarinci, mudduga tamburabetti, suddhamaina susvaramutō, baddu tappaka bhajince" and in the second "Veguva jāmuna velayusu tambura cēkoni gunamula celuvandapādutsu". In both the emphasises the importance of waking up early in the morning and singing with susvaras, to the sruti of the tambura. The singing should also be according to the rules or paddadhi "Baddu tappaka".

It is interesting to note here that Kshētrayya, giving the characteristics of an ideal woman in his pada "Samayamugade Vānipondu" says, that, in addition to beauty, intelligence, knowledge and various other qualities she should also be able to sing and dance to the accompaniment of the tambura. "Gāyakuralu kāvalē Oh celiyarō

Ātaku meti kāvale, Tambura  
Gōta mīta rāgamanavalē".

Thus it is clear that the Tambura was an indispensable accompaniment for vocal and dance.

Regarding the mrdangam Tyāgarāja's says in the Sriranjani song "Sogasuga mrdangatālamu" that the Kriti with fine words, suddha svaras, yati, visrama, the taste of drāksha rasa and the navarasas, when sung to the sweet tones of the mrdanga makes one to fall into ecstasy. Incidentally this song also gives us the lakshana of a kriti. That the mrdangam was used by Haridāsa kīrtana bhajana gōshti

while going through the streets is seen in the kriti. "Haridāsu" in Yamunākalyāni. The maddala is mentioned in the kriti "Svararāgasudha" in Sankarābharana.

Though the nāgasvaram enjoys an eminent position in the religious and social life of the people of South India, yet it does not find a place in Sangīta literature or in musical compositions as do the other instruments. Actually it came into use in South India only after the 15th Century AD, as is seen from many inscriptions in Temples. The only kriti which refers to it is "Tyāgarājamahādvaṣārōha" in Srīrāga, of Muthuswāmi Dikshitar. He says that, as the dvaṣārōham took place, the sound of the nāgasvaram and maddalam spread all over the yāgasāla. Incidentally, this also proves the fact that the name of the instrument is nāgasvaram and not nādasvaram as is pronounced by many even now. This is all the more true as nāgasvaram rhymes with the words 'Tyāgarāja' "nāgavarāli" and "Agāma siddhanta". References to musical instruments may be quoted without number, but those given here are sufficient to prove that our composers had a good understanding of instrumental music also.

In the foregoing pages a brief survey of some of the compositions of our great vāggēyakāras has been made in order to gather material regarding their lives, parentage, training, and their ideas about the science and art of music, instruments and so on. There remains still a vast number of songs which will surely yield more valuable details. But the study done so far is sufficient to prove that the great composers were supreme in all aspects of the art, worshipping at the feet of the muse of music with great devotion and singleness of purpose.